BC STATS
Province of British Columbia
Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations

# Infoline

Issue: **97-16** **5** Pages
April 18, 1997

You will find the last 5 issues on our website:
**http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca**

Report **First 1996 Census Release - Population & Dwellings**

## BC at a glance . . .

| **POPULATION (thousands)** | Jan 1/97 | % change on year ago |
|---|---|---|
| BC | 3,902.5 | 2.2 |
| Canada | 30,135.9 | 1.1 |
| **GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT** | | % change |
| *(BC - at market prices - $ millions)* | 1995 | on year ago |
| Current Dollars | 103,273 | 4.6 |
| Constant (1986) Dollars | 74,107 | 1.9 |
| **TRADE ($ millions)** | | |
| Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Feb | 2,843 | 7.0 |
| Merchandise Exports (raw) Jan | 2,091 | 10.5 |
| Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jan | 2,815 | 9.7 |
| **CONSUMER PRICE INDEX** | | % change |
| *(all items - 1986=100)* | Feb '97 | on year ago |
| BC | 139.4 | 0.9 |
| Canada | 137.3 | 2.2 |
| **LABOUR FORCE (thousands)** | | % change |
| *(seasonally adjusted)* | Mar '97 | on year ago |
| Labour Force - BC | 1,985 | 1.4 |
| Employed - BC | 1,819 | 1.5 |
| Unemployed - BC | 167 | 0.4 |
| | | Mar '96 |
| Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)* | 8.4 | 8.5 |
| Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)* | 9.3 | 9.4 |
| **INTEREST RATES (percent)** | Apr 16/97 | Apr 17/96 |
| Prime Business Rate | 4.75 | 6.75 |
| Conventional Mortgages - 1 year | 5.55 | 7.00 |
| - 5 year | 7.65 | 8.50 |
| **US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE** | Apr 16/97 | Apr 17/96 |
| *(avg. noon spot rate)* Cdn $ | 1.3975 | 1.3564 |
| US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)* | 0.7156 | 0.7372 |
| **AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS** | | % change |
| *(industrial aggregate - dollars)* | Jan '97 | on year ago |
| BC | 616.83 | 3.9 |
| Canada | 594.44 | 4.0 |

**SOURCES:**
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Review

## Census Figures on the Internet

Selected data for British Columbia from the 1996 Census has been put up on our website. This round of data covers population and dwelling counts. This week's Report provides a summary and a schedule for data that will be released over the next one and one-half years.

A new "touchbar" has been added near the top of our home page. New with this census is the direct publication of figures for the Islands Trust.

Once in the census section, be sure to read the notes to familiarize yourself with census terminology and definitions. If you are looking for census documents, see the list of depository libraries in British Columbia and other countries. Full depository libraries can be found in Berlin, London, Tokyo and Washington DC.

## Important Note

The census population figures that are published at this time are not directly comparable to our municipal estimates. While the census is intended to be accurate and complete, it is subject to error and a small degree of non-compliance. It is also pegged to Census Day, which for the 1996 Census was May 14, 1996. Our population estimates, while still based on the 1991 Census and subsequent estimation, do reflect an attempt to apportion the estimated census undercount and to base the estimates on July 1. Statistics Canada will quantify and address these requirements with a release of official Population Estimates for Canada and the provinces/territories in the fall of 1998.

### Released this week by BC STATS

- Immigration Highlights, 1996 Annual
- Small Business Quarterly, Fourth Quarter 1996

### Next week

- Earnings and Employment Trends, January 1997
- Consumer Price Index, March 1997
- Business Indicators, April 1997
- Current Statistics, April 1997

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# Infoline Report:

## 1996 Census Highlights

**April 18, 1997**

This document and a selection of census data for BC and municipalities (CSDs) are on our website.

Earlier this week the first results from the 1996 Census - population and dwelling counts - were released by Statistics Canada. Information on other characteristics of the B.C. population such as age, ethnicity, education, income, etc. will be released over the next two years.

### The Province

British Columbia had the fastest growing population of any province or territory in Canada between 1991 and 1996. On May 14, 1996, the population of B.C. was counted at 3,724,500 people, an increase of 13.5% from the population measured by the 1991 Census[1] and more than double the 5.7% increase in the Canadian population over the five year period. The next two fastest growing provinces were Ontario (6.6%) and Alberta (5.9%); the Northwest Territories (11.7%) and Yukon (10.7%) also experienced strong growth between 1991 and 1996.

### Regional Districts

Within the province the strongest growth generally occurred in the Lower Mainland (including the Sunshine Coast and Squamish/Whistler areas) (15%), the east coast of Vancouver Island (excluding the Capital area) (19%) and the Okanagan Valley (18%). With the exception of Stikine, all regional districts (census divisions) in the province experienced growth between 1991 and 1996, led by Squamish-Lillooet (26%) and Central Okanagan (22%). The population decline in the Stikine was due largely to the 1992 closure of the mine at Cassiar and the subsequent out-migration from the region.

### Municipalities

Among large municipalities (those with populations of more than 100,000), the strongest growth in the 1991-1996 period was posted in Surrey (24%), followed by Abbotsford and Coquitlam (both 21%). Of Canadian municipalities of this size, only Richmond Hill, Ontario had stronger growth than these three B.C. municipalities. Among smaller municipalities (those with populations of more than 5,000), Whistler had the strongest growth (61%) in the country between 1991 and 1996, although the smaller neighbouring community of Pemberton had even stronger growth (70%). In the >5,000 size category, three municipalities in the central part of Vancouver Island ranked next in terms of population growth: Courtenay (48%), Ladysmith (32%) and Qualicum Beach (31%).

**Top Municipalities (>5,000 People) in Terms of Growth from 1991 to 1996**

| Municipality | 1996 | % Change |
|---|---|---|
| Whistler | 7,172 | 60.8 |
| Courtenay | 17,335 | 48.2 |
| Ladysmith | 6,456 | 32.4 |
| Qualicum Beach | 6,728 | 31.0 |
| Parksville | 9,472 | 28.3 |
| Port Coquitlam | 46,682 | 26.9 |
| Surrey | 304,477 | 24.2 |
| Chilliwack | 60,186 | 21.5 |
| Langley | 80,179 | 21.4 |
| City of Abbotsford | 105,403 | 21.3 |
| Coquitlam | 101,820 | 21.2 |
| Salmon Arm | 14,664 | 21.0 |

[1] The Census counts are a snapshot of the population on May 14, 1996 and do not include those persons who were missed on Census day, but do include a small number of people who were counted more than once. Statistics Canada conducts post-censal coverage studies to determine the size of these two factors and will publish **official** Population Estimates for Canada and the provinces/territories, adjusted for net under-enumeration, in the fall of 1998. This official estimate will also be adjusted to July 1, 1996.

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**Urban and Rural Population**

Between 1991 and 1996, the population of B.C. has become more urbanised with 82% of people living in urban areas compared with 80% in 1991. The number of persons per dwelling in urban areas is generally lower than in rural areas - 2.57 for urban areas as compared to 2.73 for rural areas in 1996. The stronger population growth in urban areas has contributed to even faster growth in the number of occupied private dwellings (14.6%) than in the population (13.5%) in the last five years. This has resulted in an overall decline in the average number of persons per dwelling from 2.62 persons in 1991 to 2.60 persons in 1996.

**Characteristics of Population Growth**

Although information on the char-acteristics of the population growth between 1991 and 1996 is not yet available from the 1996 Census, current population estimates provide insight into some aspects of the growth. Over three quarters (78%) of the population gain between 1991 and 1996 was due to migration with natural increase (births minus deaths) accounting for the rest. International migration represented 43% and interprovincial migration 35% of the total population increase. In comparison to the previous five years (1986-1991), the importance of international migration as a source of population growth has increased - from 35% to 43%, while the shares of population growth attributable to interprovincial migration (from 37% to 35%) and natural increase (from 28% to 22%) have decreased.

On the international side, three quarters (76%) of the immigrants to B.C. in the 1991 to 1996 period were from Asian countries (27% from Hong Kong), 12% from European countries and 5% from the rest of North America. In the case of migration from other provinces, 41% of net interprovincial migration to B.C. was from Ontario, 25% from Alberta and 34% from the rest of the country.

Migrants to B.C., both from other countries and other provinces, are generally younger than the overall population and thus the large influx of migrants during the last five years has tended to retard the ageing of the population. While 15 to 24 year olds accounted for 22% of the migration to B.C. between 1991 and 1996, they only represented 13% of the provincial population in 1996. On the other hand, those 65 and over represented only 4% of the migration to the province in the last five years, but accounted for 13% of the population in 1996.

## 1996 Census Release Dates

| | |
|---|---|
| Apr 15, 1997 | Population and dwelling counts |
| Oct 14, 1997 | Age, sex, marital status, common-law families |
| Nov 4, 1997 | Immigration and citizenship |
| Dec 2, 1997 | Mother tongue, home languages, official and non-official languages |
| Jan 13, 1998 | Aboriginal information |
| Feb 17, 1998 | Ethnic origin |
| Mar 17, 1998 | Labour force activity, occupation, industry, household activ-ities, place of work, mode of transportation |
| Apr 14, 1998 | Education, mobility, migration |
| May 12, 1998 | Sources of income, family and household income |
| Jun 9, 1998 | Social and economic characteristics of families, occupied private dwellings, housing costs |

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# highlights

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a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

## *Population*

- **On May 14, 1996, British Columbia's population was counted at 3,724,500 people, an increase of 13.5% from the population measured by the 1991 Census.** BC had the fastest-growing population of any province or territory between 1991 and 1996. The Northwest Territories (+11.7%), Yukon (+10.7%), Ontario (+6.6%) and Alberta (+5.9%) also grew at above-average rates. Canada's population rose 5.7% to 28,846,761. These preliminary Census estimates have not yet been adjusted to include people who were missed on Census Day. Once that adjustment has been made, the final official population estimates based on the 1996 Census will be released. *Source: SC, 1996 Census of Canada*

- **Within the province, the strongest overall population growth was in the east coast of Vancouver Island excluding the Capital area (19%), the Okanagan Valley (18%), and the Lower Mainland, which includes the Sunshine Coast and Squamish/Whistler areas (15%).** With the exception of Stikine (where the closure of the Cassiar mine led to out-migration from the area), all *regional districts* in the province grew between 1991 and 1996, led by Squamish-Lillooet (26%) and Central Okanagan (22%). Whistler's population growth (61%) was the strongest of any municipality with a population of 5,000 or more people in the country.
*Source: SC, 1996 Census of Canada*

- **International immigration to BC reached 50,473 last year–the highest level recorded since 1912.** The two previous high immigration records were 51,614 in 1911 and 53,996 in 1912.

  Immigration to the province increased 14.5% in 1996, almost triple the growth at the national level (5.2%, to 222,004). BC's share of total Canadian landings reached a record high of 22.7%, up from 20.9% in 1995. The province was the second most popular destination after Ontario, which received just over half of all new immigrants to the country last year. Eight out of ten BC immigrants came from Asia, while Europeans accounted for 11% of the total. Hong Kong continued to lead all other countries as the most important source of immigration to the province. One in four immigrants to British Columbia came from Hong Kong. *Source: BC STATS*

- **Eighty-four percent of immigrants to BC last year said they intended to live in the Vancouver area.** The area was especially popular among Asian immigrants, 88% of whom planned to settle in the Lower Mainland. This compares to 69% of immigrants from other parts of the world. Only 2% (1% of Asians and 3% of non-Asians) of immigrants identified the Victoria area as their planned destination.

  Fourteen percent of immigrants to BC intended to settle in parts of the province outside the Lower Mainland and Capital regions. While only 11% of Asians identified these areas as their intended destination, 28% of non-Asian immigrants said they planned to live outside southwestern BC. While the planned destination is the one identified by a prospective immigrant on a visa application, it should be noted that immigrants may choose to settle in another area once they are in Canada. *Source: BC STATS*

## *Business and Economics*

- **Although retail sales in the province rose only 1.4% last year, there was considerable variability among regions.** Retail sales in the Central Okanagan were up 19.9%, and strong growth was also recorded in the Fraser Valley (+16.3%), Fraser-Fort George (+12.0%) and Fort Nelson-Liard (+11.3%) Regional Districts. Sales rose 7.5% in the Capital Regional District, but fell 1.0% in Greater Vancouver. Retail sales were weak in many parts of the province, with

*For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.*

***Did you know...?***

***The hamburger standard is back! According to the Economist magazine, the cheapest Big Macs in the world (in US funds) are in China, where a Beijing Big Mac costs $1.16. People in Switzerland fork over the most ($4.02) for a burger. We're on the lower end of the scale, at $2.07, which is less than the cost of a burger on the other side of the border ($2.42).***

the largest declines occurring in the Central Coast (-17.8%), Cowichan Valley (-17.1%), and Mount Waddington (-16.5%) Regional Districts.

*Source: BC STATS*

- **Exports of BC products were 8.9% higher in February than in the same month last year.** This was the first time since 1995 that exports have risen in two consecutive months. The increase was largely due to a recovery in forest product exports, which rose for the second straight month (+7.8%) after declining throughout all of 1996. Exports of consumer goods (+18.2%), energy products (+16.8%) and machinery and equipment (+10.0%) were also strong. However, agriculture and fish product exports rose only marginally (+0.8%) from February 1996, and automotive product exports were down (-1.8%).

  Fueled by strength in the energy sector (Alberta's energy exports were up almost fifty percent), Alberta led the provinces in terms of export growth (+22.9%) in February. Alberta continued to outpace BC, with total exports from that province outnumbering those from BC almost three to two. Newfoundland also benefitted from the energy boom, as a quadrupling in international sales of energy products led to export growth of 16.1%. BC's export growth (+8.9%) was the third highest in the country.

  Nationally, exports rose 5.0% between February 1996 and the same month this year, despite relatively slow growth in both Ontario (+2.0%) and Quebec (+2.9%). Exports were down in PEI (-21.0%), New Brunswick (-6.7%), Nova Scotia (-1.5%) and Saskatchewan (-1.3%).

  *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia declined slightly (-0.6%) between January and February, on a seasonally adjusted basis.** The drop in shipments was largely due to weakness in the durable goods manufacturing sector. Shipments of wood products were unchanged from the previous month, but shipments declined in five of the eight other durable goods manufacturing industries. Overall, durable goods shipments were down 1.3% in February. In the non-durables sector, shipments of paper and allied products were up 1.3%, but food shipments fell (-3.2%), and total non-durable goods shipments were virtually unchanged (+0.2%) from the previous month. Nationally, manufacturing shipments rose 0.6% in February, with the largest gains occurring in Saskatchewan (+5.7%) and Manitoba (+3.5%).

  *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The Port of Vancouver handled a record amount of cargo (72.0 million tonnes) in 1996, exceeding the previous record (71.5 million tonnes) set in 1995.** More than $30 billion in trade to and from 90 countries–and 2,785 foreign vessels–passed through the Port last year. The Port is the largest foreign tonnage port in Canada, and one of the top three in North America.

  Container traffic through the Port of Vancouver was up 19% to 5.1 million tonnes in 1996, and bulk cargo increased 2% to 61.1 million tonnes. Coal shipments (the single largest commodity handled by the Port) rose 5% to 27.8 million tonnes. However, general cargo shipments were down 24% to 5.8 million tonnes, largely as a result of the transfer of barge cargo destined for Vancouver Island from the Port of Vancouver to Fraser Port. *Source: Vancouver Port Corporation*

## *Tourism*

- **Cruise traffic through the Port of Vancouver continued to grow in 1996.** Last year, 289 cruise ships visited Vancouver, up from 283 in the previous year. These ships carried 701,547 passengers, an 18% increase over the previous year, when 596,724 passengers either embarked or disembarked in the city. About 60% of cruise ship passengers make one-way trips, and 40% make round trips, suggesting that approximately half a million people visited Vancouver on a cruise last year. Cruise traffic through the Port of Vancouver has been growing steadily for the last fourteen years. *Source: Vancouver Port Corporation*

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